

**FCC MAIL ROOM**

**CT 23**

59425 Apple Road  
Osceola, IN 46561  
October 20, 1998

FCC Secretary  
Magalie Roman Salas  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 "M" Street N.W., Room 222  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: IN THE MATTER OF 1998 BIENNIAL REGULATORY REVIEW; AMENDMENT  
OF PART 97 OF THE COMMISSION'S AMATEUR SERVICE RULES, FCC WT  
DOCKET 98-143.

Dear Ms. Salas:

There has been a lot of talk lately about changing the amateur radio service. What it boils down to is that there are certain groups that would like to see amateur radio easier to get in to. It is a sad commentary that those organizations want this to happen to help them acquire more wealth. Kenwood and Icom want to sell more radios, the ARRL wants to collect more dues, and Gordon West wants to sell more training manuals. To accomplish these ends they need more hams, not smarter, more dedicated, more qualified hams, just more hams. It is so easy to get a license now that a blind friend of mine got her extra class upgrade a few days before I did and never missed a single question on any element but she will tell you in no uncertain terms that she does not know what most of that stuff on the tests means.

All my life I respected hams having not been one until 6 years ago but now I see the influx of CBers and others who will never do anything to advance the state of the art because they do not know the difference between a transistor and a resistor and do not care to. All they want to do is get on the radio and fill the spectrum with mindless chatter. Imagine yourself as a Nobel laureate 10 years later when everybody who gets a driver's license also gets a Nobel prize, would it cheapen the award, of course it would and so it would be with ham radio. Gordon West says the FCC will go with the majority vote. Does this mean that if enough husbands and wives are unfaithful God will repeal the commandment that says "Thou shalt not commit adultery", of course not. Just because a lot of people want it does mean it is right. What is good for amateur radio is what is right. Would you want medical schools to lower their standards so that we could have more doctors? I thought it would be neat to play pro

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football but I was not good enough and I had to live with that fact, I did not ask them to lower their standards. It has gotten easier and easier to get on the eleven meter band and now it is the cesspool of the radio world and will never be reclaimed. I do not want to see this happen to the ham bands. I hope you will do what is best for amateur radio not what is best for those who want everything handed to them on a silver platter. America is looked upon as the best there is in the world from our space program to our military, agriculture, colleges, personal freedoms, standard of living, and the breath taking beauty of our land. Our amateur radio operators should reflect the pride we all have in this great nation of ours. They should be the best. It has been my observation that if you want excellence you have to demand it. Once you lower the standard for hams, you can never go back to the way it was so please take your time and do what is best for America and amateur radio.

I would like to see one class of license remain that would allow a ham to get on the air with 5 WPM to get the practice needed to become proficient with CW. This could be done with the tech plus license, and the novice class could be done away with. Novices could be grandfathered to tech plus instead of general and thereby avoid the resentment from those who earned their general class license. The 13 WPM test should be retained to limit access to the HF bands. The speed is high enough that it will keep people from copying the dots and dashes to be translated at the end of the test as some do at the 5 WPM level. If someone wants HF privileges, they can earn them with the CW test. How else can we limit access to the HF bands? It would not be fair to just sell access to those who could afford it and it would be a travesty to open the flood gates with a multiple choice quiz that people will take over and over 3 and 4 times at one sitting, week after week, like they do now, until they pass. Those people who are opposed to the code requirement tell me that there is enough spectrum for everybody because there are so many bands unlike the lone eleven meter band. The fact is that most times during the day you might only be able to work a couple of bands, maybe 20, 17, and 15 if you are lucky. At night, 20 and above go dead, 40 is plagued with foreign broadcasts and 160 is too real-estate intensive so you are left with the 80 meter band and remember, do not call CQ on 80 meters. The problem is that you have a lot of hams out there loaded with emotion but lacking facts or logic. These people tell us that they are too lazy or not good enough to pass the 13 WPM test so they just want us to give them the upgrade or as Gordon West says, we should let them, "write their own tickets". CW is the second most popular form of communication in amateur radio and people are still falling in love with it every day. If we do not learn the Morse code we lock ourselves out of a whole other world. If we never learn to read, we miss out on a lot of great books and it takes a person years to learn to read, but we all feel it is time well spent. The nocoders tell me that

they do not want to do CW so they should not be tested on it. I do not want to work satellites but was I not tested on the different modes?

I have no comment on the 20 WPM test other than if it works do not fix it and what harm would it do to leave some spectrum set aside for the extras?

The medical waiver issue is a sore subject with hams who passed their 13 WPM tests and then watched someone get a waiver because he had a broken leg in his childhood. If the medical waivers were processed only by the FCC, the volume of applicants would drop dramatically.

Enforcement is a big problem especially when malicious interference is caused by non hams. I am a technical specialist in Indiana With the ARRL and have been involved in a lot of RDF work in the Elkhart area. The problem we ran into after we caught someone red handed was that the FCC was too busy and we had no jurisdiction or authority to make them stop.

When I look at the game of baseball and how it still has a batter with a wooden bat that has to hit a ball and run around 4 bases, I wonder why we have to change amateur radio. Would baseball be better with 3 or 5 bases? The Constitution has changed less than amateur radio and it is over 200 years old. The 10 Commandments are older than Jesus Christ. Do we have to change something just for the sake of change?

If you listen to the beanie baby updates on 2 meters by people who could not tell coax from speaker wire, you know that Hiram Maxim must be turning over in his grave. Let us keep amateur radio from becoming any more like CB. I sit here watching what is happening to the amateur radio service and I feel as if I am watching an old friend slowly being consumed by a disease for which there is no cure, hoping that before it is too late, someone will come along with a cure. I've heard the saying, "God save the Queen" but only the FCC can save the amateur radio service.

Thank you for letting me comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pete Ostapchuk". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Peter L. Ostapchuk, N9SFX